

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
for the
Southern District of Texas

United States of America)
v.)
Pedro Cruz ALMEIDA Jr. (USA/2001)) Case No. 7:23-mj-0259
)
) United States Courts
) Southern District of Texas
) FILED

Defendant(s)

February 09, 2023

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Nathan Ochsner, Clerk of Court

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of February 03 and February 09, 2023 in the county of Hidalgo in the
Southern District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

Offense Description

18 USC 554 and 2

Aided and abetted the attempted export from the United States of any merchandise, article, or object, to wit: 900 rounds of Lake City .50 caliber tracer-equipped linked ammunition, as defined by the Commerce Control List, contrary to any law or regulation of the United States, in that the Defendant had not obtained a license or written authorization for such export, in violation of Title 50, United States Code, Section 4819(2), and Title 15, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 730 et seq., all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 554

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See ATTACHMENT "A"

Continued on the attached sheet.

Approved by AUSA Peter Brostowin

/s/ William A. Hartley

Complainant's signature

William A. Hartley, Special Agent, HSI

Printed name and title

Submitted by reliable electronic means, sworn to and attested to telephonically per Fed. R. Cr. 4.1, and probable cause found on:

Date: 02/09/2023 @ 6:33 p.m.

City and state: McAllen, Texas

Honorable Juan F. Alanis, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

ATTACHMENT "A"

On February 03, 2023, at approximately 1:35 p.m., a Hidalgo County Constable's Office (HCCO) Precinct #3 Constable conducted a traffic stop on a 2022 red Hyundai Elentra bearing Texas License Plates PZL1211, for Failure to Stop at a Designated Point at Stop Sign, in McAllen, Texas.

Upon making contact with the vehicle, the HCCO Constable encountered the driver who was identified as Pedro Cruz ALMEIDA Jr. (hereinafter referred to as "ALMEIDA"), a United States Citizen. Through the course of the encounter, the HCCO Constable asked for and received consent from ALMEIDA to search the vehicle. During search, the HCCO Constable located packages in the back of the vehicle and inquired with ALMEIDA as to what was in the packages. ALMEIDA stated to the HCCO Constable that it was .50 caliber ammunition. Additional boxes of ammunition were found in the trunk of the vehicle being driven by ALMEIDA, which resulted in a total of 600 rounds of Lake City .50 caliber tracer-equipped linked ammunition.

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agents (SAs) arrived on-scene and asked if ALMEIDA would come back to the McAllen, Texas Police Department to speak with Agents and Officers regarding the .50 caliber ammunition in his possession, to which time he agreed to do so.

Post-*Miranda*, ALMEIDA stated that the ammunition was intended to be transferred to an unidentified individual driving a vehicle with Tamaulipas, Mexico License Plates. ALMEIDA stated that he routinely meets with an individual in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico to receive cash used to purchase ammunition. ALMEIDA stated he then orders ammunition at the direction of this individual in Mexico with the cash received. ALMEIDA stated that he had been taking part in this activity for approximately one (1) year.

ALMEIDA stated he has ordered ammunition approximately thirty (30) times over the past year, and that once he is in possession of the ammunition he calls an individual in Mexico to learn when and where to deliver the ammunition. ALMEIDA stated that he delivers the ammunition to vehicles bearing Tamaulipas, Mexico license plates, at various locations, including within the vicinity of the Hidalgo, Texas Port of Entry (POE). ALMEIDA stated an individual would then take the vehicle and smuggle the ammunition from the United States into Mexico. ALMEIDA stated he was paid \$100.00 United States Dollars (USD) for every box of ammunition he delivered.

On February 09, 2023, HSI SAs seized an additional 300 rounds of Lake City .50 caliber tracer-equipped linked ammunition from ALMEIDA that was received on February 9, which was intended to be smuggled from the United States into Mexico on February 9. ALMEIDA was arrested for 18 United States Code (USC) 554 Smuggling Goods from the United States.